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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/539,594

10/18/2006

Axel Hebenstreit

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CROWELL & MORING LLP
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY GROUP
P.O. BOX 14300
WASHINGTON, DC 20044-4300

EXAMINER

WAITS, ALAN B

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3682

MAIL DATE

DELIVERY MODE

09/30/2008

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/539,594	Applicant(s) HEBENSTREIT ET AL.	
	Examiner ALAN B. WAITS	Art Unit 3682	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 23 August 2007.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 11-22 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 11-22 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 17 June 2005 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☒ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>8/23/2007, 10/18/2006</u> . | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

1. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

2. Claims 17, 19, and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claims 17, 19, and 20 recite the limitation "that face". There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

4. Claims 11-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Hirschfeld et al USP 6892602.

Hirschfeld discloses a similar device comprising:

Re clm 11:

- A steering spindle (3, fig 1) which is mounted in a casing tube (2, fig1) so as to be rotationally movable

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- A switch module (10, fig 1) which is held immovably with respect to the rotational movement of the steering spindle and is fixed radially and axially on the casing tube
- The switch module is supported on a bearing (9, fig 1) arranged on the steering spindle
- The switch module comprises a centering device (fig 3) [which, under a force which is oriented coaxially with respect to the longitudinal axis of the steering spindle, fixes the switch module on the casing tube and clamps it radially.

Re clm 12:

- The centering device comprises a stator (11, fig 1) and clamping jaws (13, fig 1)

Re clm 13:

- The stator is connected to the bearing (fig 1)

Re clm 14 & 15:

- The stator is connected to each clamping jaw via a spring element (19, fig 1)

Re clm 16:

- Each clamping jaw is in contact with the casing tube by way of a support (20, fig 1)

Re clm 17:

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- That face (15, fig 1) of the clamping jaw which faces the stator extends obliquely with regard to the longitudinal axis of the steering spindle

Re clm 18:

- The inner face (inside of 11, fig 1) of the stator extends parallel to the oblique face of the clamping jaw

Re clm 19 & 20:

- An elevation protrudes from that face of the clamping jaw which faces the casing tube (inside of 15, fig 3)

Re clm 21:

- The axial force can be applied by means of a steering wheel bolt (4, fig 1)

Re clm 22:

- A leaf spring (15, fig 1) which engages in a cut-out (section of 2 where the diameter decreases and the inside is hollow, fig 1) of the casing tube is provided on the stator (11, fig 1)

Regarding the functional recitation(s) in the claim(s) above denoted by the “[]” the examiner notes while features of an apparatus may be recited either structurally or functionally, claims directed to >an< apparatus must be distinguished from the prior art in terms of structure rather than function. The reference discloses all the claimed structural limitations and therefore anticipates the claim. See MPEP 2114. Additionally, the apparatus is capable of performing the claimed functions.

Conclusion

5. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Rudolph et al. USP 6492744 and Hallet EP 1108637 each disclose a similar device.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to ALAN B. WAITS whose telephone number is (571)270-3664. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday 7:30 am to 5 pm EST.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Richard Ridley can be reached on 571-272-6917. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Alan B Waits/
Examiner, Art Unit 3682

/Richard WL Ridley/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 3682